

**Randy Thurston
Vice President, City Council
Pueblo, Colorado**

**Testimony
Before the Committee on Resources,
Subcommittee on Water & Power Resources,
United States House of Representatives**

**Oversight Field Hearing: “*Colorado: Options to Increase Water Supply
and Improve Efficiencies.*”**

December 12, 2003

Before the Subcommittee on Water and Power Resources

**Testimony on Behalf of the City of Pueblo, Colorado,
Randy Thurston, Vice President, Pueblo City Council**

December 12, 2003

The severe drought conditions that struck Colorado and other regions of the arid

West in 2002, have made it clear that additional water storage in the state, in combination with sensible growth management, and increased water conservation and use efficiency, is necessary to provide a reliable future water supply for the State's increasing population and to meet competing demands for water. Regional cooperation to identify and develop appropriate projects is required. Reasonable mitigation of detrimental impacts will be necessary. In Southeastern Colorado, new efforts are being

fertile soils in the region had water for the initial part of the growing season, but not all.

[REDACTED]

1

1

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

finalized in September 2003. The City Councils of Pueblo and Colorado Springs are working more closely together than ever before on water issues, as a result, and Pueblo commends and recognizes the new leadership in Colorado Springs that has facilitated this. While Pueblo's on-going concerns with the proposed legislation relating to Pueblo Reservoir have not yet been resolved, the Cities are working hard to reach specific agreement on these and related issues that would permit the legislation to go forward. The Pueblo City Council is optimistic that these efforts will ultimately be successful and that a "win-win" result can soon be achieved.

Pueblo remains committed to pursuing an appropriate, cooperative resolution of the issues that will allow for increased water storage opportunities in Pueblo Reservoir to improve water supply reliability, while protecting the interest of Pueblo and its residents in preserving appropriate minimum flow levels in the Arkansas River through Pueblo. Additional time is necessary, however, to allow the affected state interests to develop an appropriate solution, and federal legislation mandating specific actions in the advance of local agreement could chill the new cooperation.

III. CONCLUSION

The proposed expansion of the Fryingpan-Arkansas project provides an example of the complexities and difficulties associated with new water storage projects in Colorado. Recognition of the competing uses and values of water in an evolving Colorado, and cooperation at the regional and local levels is necessary for such projects to become a reality. Federal action that would discourage such cooperation, or which fails to recognize the necessity for a reasonable balance of the various competing interests, will serve only to shift the focus of discussion from problem-solving at the negotiating table, to the types of legal and permitting wrangle that historically plagued projects like Two Forks and Animas-La Plata.

DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENT
Required by House Rule XI, clause 2(g)
and Rules of the Committee on Resources

A. This part is to be completed by all witnesses:

1. Name: Randy Thurston, Vice President, Pueblo City Council
2. Business Address: One City Hall Place
Pueblo, CO 81003
3. Business Phone Number: (719) 553-2655
4. Organization you are representing: City of Pueblo, Colorado

including the source and amount of each grant or contract:

3. Any other information you wish to convey which might aid the members of the Committee to better understand the context of your testimony:

Resume

Randy Thurston

156 Encino Drive
Pueblo, Colorado 81005
Home (719) 566-1911

EXPERIENCE HIGHLIGHTS:

- Owned largest real estate and property management company in Pueblo for 11 years before selling in October 2001
- Chosen Business Leader of the Year in 1999 both in Colorado and nationwide by FBLA
- Played major role in developing Arkansas River Water Preservation Principles
- City Council Member, District 3 (current Vice-President) – Term: January 1, 2002 through December 31, 2005

HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA, South High School, Pueblo, Colorado.

MEMBERSHIPS:

- Current Vice-President, Pueblo City Council
- Current Chairman, Pueblo Area Council of Governments (PACOG)
- Planning & Zoning Commission
- Urban Renewal Authority

PERSONAL REFERENCES:

Available upon request